

① Diane Koehn's Interview
with
Ellen Parkkonen

me: Diane Koehn, December 13, 1990. Interviewing Mrs. Parkkonen she was a student at National ~~Mine~~ Mine at her home in Ishpeming township.

me: When and where ~~was~~ were you born?

Mrs. P: In Ishpeming, September 26, 1928

me: OK, Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mrs P: ^{I had} Three brothers, one died soon after birth

me: uh-ha

Mrs P: I had two other brothers one was Lloyd he was born in 1925, ~~and~~ another brother Rupert was born in 1926 but he was killed Rupert was killed in a mine accident in 1955

me: OK, um when were your parents born

Mrs P: um when were they born?

me: yes

Mrs. P: my mother was born in 1901 and she was born in National Mine + her name was Bertha Hodge before she was married and my dad was Alex Frederickson and he was born in National Mine in 1897.

me: OK, what years did you attend National Mine School?

Mrs. P: 1935 to 1946. I did quit school in 1946 because my mother was sick

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and I was needed at home to help her even though she didn't want me too. She was right in bed

Mrs. P: and in those days you couldn't have someone come in and take care of you. ^{afford to}

me: What did you have to do around the house?

Mrs. P: Well I did all the house work + she was right in an oxygen tent at home

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: so I did all the house work and baking and every-thing there was to do.

me: OK

Mrs. P: but later I did go on and graduate from night school in 1972. I finally went to night school ~~and~~ every night and made up because I had gone through eleventh grade when I quit.

me: OK, uh do you remember any of the names of your grade school teachers? And what they were like.

Mrs. P: uh, yea, um Mrs. Gleason uh that was not her name then I'm trying to think of ~~her~~ her maiden name, that was when I had her. She was an excellent teacher and I remember all the programs she used to put on at National Mine School, they were the excellent programs and the Christmas programs they had such a meaning to them the true meaning of Christmas but she put so much time and thought into ^{all} her programs. but she was an excellent teacher in every way. And then uh Ms. Magnuson or now Mrs. Mason was another one and then uh Fanny Millimaki, I remember her

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: um they were all good teachers some were a little more strict than others. I remember Fanny Millimaki was

quite strict. But you knew which ~~ones~~ ^{teachers} were the more strict + which ones you really had to buckle down and knew they meant business

me: did you have a favorite one?

Mrs. P: mmm... I had a couple favorite teachers. Mrs. Gleason would have been one of them

me: and why was she one?

Mrs. P: I think it was just the way she was with everyone and as far as I know she was fair with everyone and it maybe another thing that uh just seeing the way she was even later on after she got married and everything it might be everything added to it

me: Do you have any other favorite teachers?

Mrs. P: Are you asking about High school too?

me: uh, well just grade school

Mrs. P: uh, can't just think right now, I know I had another and I can't just think of her name so

me: OK, do you remember any interesting stories about those teachers?

Mrs. P: I can remember interesting stories but I don't think I'll say them. (ha ha ha)

me: OK, do you remember any of the names of your junior high or high school teachers.

Mrs. P: uh, well Mr. Bath was Superintendent and Mr. Annala was the Superintendent uh, ~~now~~ Mr. Annala English and I'll never forget because he was ^{also taught} a very good English teacher

Mrs. P

but at the same time very strict, and I'll never forget because the word cacky always sticks out in my mind because uh he always wanted as you pronounced it as cocky, and it was something I always, always remembered with him but he was a very good teacher many didn't like him but I did. Uh and then we had Mr. Gleason as our gym teacher there's quite a difference ^{now} ~~in~~ in high school at National Mine than there was back then uh, but then now you don't have 9-12 up there so it makes a lot of difference but we had seventh through ninth or through 12th grade. That you seventh and ~~8th~~ ~~8th~~ 8th grade were together but ~~then~~ then you had ninth through ~~10th~~ 12th and you couldn't wait to get to get in ninth grade to start changing around your classes

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: which was very nice, there were other teachers that I had in high school that I enjoyed too.

me: could you name some of them

Mrs. P: I can't think of their names the one I know our biology teacher I believe it was

me: Do you have any interesting or humorous stories about those high school teachers?

Mrs. P: uh well interesting, I don't know if it's interesting or in which way you would say it but I know that our Principle, and he was very strict and I can remember ~~you~~ you didn't dare throw snowballs outside or else you really uh then teachers could do more than they can now to anyone in school because now the rules & laws are so different

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: but it was nothing I was one of the fortunate ones and

many of us were but it was nothing to get a crack
over your head or your hands or anything from a
teacher in school if you weren't doing what you were
told but with the principle uh especially with the boys
I remember one of the boys that was kicked down the
steps for doing something wrong

me: huh

Mrs. P: and then if you had to go and sit in his office
it was something you kind of shivered at because
you knew how ~~strict~~ strict he was

me: uh huh

Mrs. P: and I think that's one thing that I remember most
how strict that he was

me: OK, how did you get to ~~school~~ school each day and
how far was it

Mrs. P: we rode a bus and we were about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles maybe
~~between~~ two and a half and three miles from school.

me: OK, what time did school start?

Mrs. P: It started at nine

me: nine

Mrs. P: and we got out at four

me: OK, how did the kids dress, was there a dress code

Mrs. P: well first before you ask that I'm going to tell you
to that when we got on the bus to go to school in
the morning the bus ride to school was alright
because they picked us up at 8:30 and then school started
at nine but the ride home we left school at four

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: but we had to travel all the way out through south all out in through that area so we left school at four and we wouldn't get home until quarter to five

me: ~~uh-huh~~ really

Mrs. P: So when the weather was nice we would walk home cause we could beat the bus home

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: by walking, and now dress code

me: Yep

Mrs. P: well as far as I know we didn't have a dress code and I think it was maybe as far as I remember there wasn't one but I don't think then you had to have a dress code because everyone just seemed to dress ^{accordingly} ~~uh-huh~~ uh, there wasn't any worry of real short clothes and uh then we didn't wear "holly" clothes so as far as I know there was no need to have a dress code

me: uh-huh, what kinds of subjects were taught

Mrs. P: Uh, your main subjects uh in your math and in the high schools and that was I think your everyday basic subjects we didn't have that say you get to a choice like now I know there are so many extra subjects to take but we didn't have that at that time. I do remember when I was in eleventh grade I wanted to have typing but uh, they only could take so many because there was only so many typewriters

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and I was one of them that would have to wait till the next semester to take typing because there wasn't enough typewriters

me: ok, Did you have shop or home-ec or anything like that

Mrs. P: had home-ec, the girls were not required to take shop, the girls took home-ec which I enjoyed the first semester we would have sewing and second semester we would have cooking,

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and I enjoyed that very much, I do think eventoday that I've heard many of the young girls say that maybe they don't like shop. I've heard boys say ~~they~~ they don't like home-ec

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and I think alot of times maybe it should be still be uh that they have a choice because if a girl is not interested in shop you know that isn't going to be an important thing later on in life to ~~her~~ ^{her} if a boy isn't interested in home-ec it isn't something he's going to go through with it be better to give him extra in shop and give a girl extra in home-ec if she wants

me: uh-huh, Did you have a favorite subject

Mrs. P: Math

me: why?

Mrs. P: Well, I guess I just enjoyed it, I enjoyed math, I enjoyed Algebra, and Geometry

me: what subject did you find the most difficult?

Mrs. P: History

me: why?

Mrs. P: I don't know if I'd say History or English

when I think of it I think I'd say English was the one I don't know if it was cause I didn't like it uh to me it just didn't interest me

me: uh-huh, were there any special sayings or fads when you were in school.

Mrs. P: there probably were but I can't think right now

me: OK

Mrs. P: I know there was some but I

me: How were the kids expected to behave?

Mrs. P: uh, well I know there was no running in the hall you didn't have a lot of noise in the halls going from classroom to classroom.

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: when I go to schools now and I see even in between classes I guess sometimes I'm shocked because of where it has come from I know they were quite strict and I don't think any of us that were in school at that time um feel any less I'd like to see a little bit more of that in the schools than there is now because I think we need the respect we need to show our teachers respect

me: before you said you'd get slapped on the hands were there any kinds of other punishments

Mrs. P: I think one of um was you would maybe have to go and sit in the corner when you're in the younger grades but the older ones seems to me it was that whoever needed to would go see the superintendent now the ones that needed to go the the superintendent I don't know what would go on there or what was said

I do know that they'd give you know you'd get your
three days that you had to be out of school.

(9)

me: uh-huh

Mrs.P: or things like that too for things you did

me: Were you or ever any of your friends ever suspended

Mrs.P: uh I never was and as far as I remember none of my
friends were either.

me: OK

Mrs.P: It wasn't one of those things that you'd see a bunch getting
I mean you wouldn't see very many so its uh you know
you remember a few who were but it wasn't a lot of problem
so

me: OK what kinds of extra activities ~~was~~^{were} offered

Mrs.P: well there was basketball for the boys but there were
no girls basketball at that time uh and we had uh there
were not a whole lot of extra activities you did your
main subjects

me: OK

Mrs.P: and basket ball games were a main thing to go to

me: uh-huh, did you participate in any of them

Mrs.P: No, like I said there wasn't that much to participate
in

me: OK did any sports teams win a trophy ^{or tournament} while you were
there?

Mrs.P: uh yea they won uh they won the basket ball team won
different times

me: uh-huh

Mrs.P: and I don't remember ~~what~~^{what} years or that but I do remember
them winning.

me: OK

me: Did that have an effect on the school?

(10)

Mrs. P: Yea a small school like that it felt like you^{with} the high school you were just like made one big family or that so uh it really made you proud

me: Ok, what kinds of plays or programs were there while you were in school.

Mrs. P: Well all the plays and programs I can remember were always excellent, but I think I had mentioned previous that Mrs. Gleason was in charge of them and she had put her whole heart into a play, the Christmas programs or anything it was uh, it was a play and everything it wasn't just music it was the whole drama everything right with it

me: Uh-huh, Did you participate in any of the plays

Mrs. P: Yea I was in I think I was in two or three

me: Ok, what were they like

Mrs. P: Well I remember one especially and I was in it that time I had uh long curls and blond hair and I can remember so well they used to always call me Shirley temple and at that time I hated it because I thought it was I don't know why because Shirley temple was popular and everything but because of my curls and all that well I was Shirley temple and I remember this one play that I was in it was uh it was something and I can't remember the name of ~~the~~ the play or nothing but I do remember having a main part that I had to be in it the whole play

me: Uh-huh Do you remember any humorous or interesting stories about any other plays

Mrs. P: Can't remember I just

me: what was lunch time like?

Mrs. P: well you knew what you were having for lunch usually or else perhaps you didn't know what you were having for lunch cause your mom always packed your lunch we weren't priviledged to have hot lunches or anything so we always wh took a bag with our lunch in

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and we went & sat in the lunch room which was whm our lunch room at that time is where the art room is now

me: ok

Mrs. P: and wh they had all the tables in there there was more the table types with wh like picnic tables

me: OK

Mrs. P: and wh but that was our lunch room and we all wh brought our lunch and wh went in there & had it.

me: was that room bigger than it was now?

Mrs. P: well at that time it seemed we were crowded

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and then we all went for lunch at the same time the young kids along with the older ones and I can remember when you were younger you sat up in the front of the lunch room and as you got older then you sat in the high school that always sat at the back

me: ok

Mrs. P: but most of the ones from National mine right around National Mine would go home for their lunch.

me: OK

Mrs. P: and we did have an hour for lunch (13)

me: or Did you have lots of home work

Mrs. P: We had home work but I don't think our home work amounted to what it does today nothing like what any of the kids are bringing home.

me: uh-huh what did you do after school when your homework was done

Mrs. P: Oh we used to we used to go out and play play different games and that but uh we played then I know that where I lived there was more boys around in that neighborhood so when there were a couple of us girls and that we used to lot of times joust and we used to play ball or when they play kick the can and some of those games in the summer

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: and uh in the winter time we used to do a lot of sleigh riding and uh tobogganing

me: were you able to maintain contact with any of your friends

Mrs. P: uh yes many of the ~~ones~~ ones that was in school with us and I think I do feel that many of us that were in high school together still ~~live~~ live around the area and I see different ones

me: uh-huh

Mrs. P: every once in awhile and uh we have good little visits together and that so yes we've been able to keep contact with quite a few

me: Do you think any of the teachers had an impact on your life

Mrs. P: Um I think that um Mrs. Gleason is (13)
one but I did I enjoyed listening to her play
the piano and I know I started to take piano lessons
at National Mine when they were giving them at
school but at the time I had taken piano lessons
for some reason the different teachers I took
from they were having problems keeping their kindergarten
or music teacher at that time so I can remember
taking from three different teachers and every six
months it seemed they ~~was~~ ^{were} changing so every
time I'd start to take they would switch or change
teachers so I'd have to start all over again and it was
one of those things - I mean I got discouraged and
just quit taking piano lessons but later on
I just started to pick it up on my own from what
I had learned that first period there and
I think Mrs. Gleason was one that I enjoyed the
way she played and that was why I wanted
to keep playing

me: ok is there any thing else you want to add

Mrs. P: I think that's, that's about it

~~me:~~

me: ok thank you